DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 013 PS 024 730

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TITLE Increasing Awareness and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity among Fourth Graders through Integrated Curriculum Experiences.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 85p.; Ed.D. Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Culture; American Indians; Black Culture; Black Leadership; Blacks; Childrens Literature; Cultural Background; Cultural Images; Grade 4; Group Discussion; Hispanic American Culture; Hispanic Americans; Intermediate Grades; Minority Groups; *Multicultural Education; *Social Studies; Student Journals; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS Diversity (Groups); Native Americans

ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to increase the cultural awareness of fourth-grade students of contributions to American society by those of different races and colors. The program consisted of an integrated 12-week curriculum and a variety of materials allowing students to conceptualize the diversity of America. Students were exposed to other cultures through literature, computer programs, research, and class discussion. The "Person or People of the Week" theme allowed discussion of particular individuals, including Ralph Bunche, Thurgood Marshall, Joan Baez, Caesar Chavez, Pablo Casals, Maria Martinez, and Bishop Harold S. Jones. After class discussion on the Person or People of the Week, students recorded information on these individuals' contributions to American history and culture in their journals. Students completed an oral and written report on a member of an ethnic minority group who contributed to American society. They explored their own cultural background by identifying the countries from which their ancestors emigrated. The results indicated that elementary school students could enumerate reasons for multicultural education, could identify the contributions to American society by Non-Europeans, could identify the native countries of their ancestors, could identify a minority person as a favorite reading topic, and could list at least three African Americans, three Hispanic Americans, and three Native Americans who have contributed to American society. The lack of authentic literature on Hispanic Americans limited students' understanding of Hispanic American culture. Appendices contain data collection and evaluation instruments and a parental questionnaire. (Contains 29 references.) (KDFB)

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Increasing Awareness and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity among Fourth Graders through Integrated Curriculum Experiences

by
Connie W. Burch
Cluster 69

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A Practicum I Report Presented to
the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
1995

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APPROVAL PAGE

This practicum took place as described.

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November 6, 1995
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This practicum report was submitted by Connie W. Burch under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Dec. 11, 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm. W. Anderson
Wm. W. Anderson, Ed.D., Adviser

Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks and grateful appreciation are expressed to the following people without whom this practicum would not have reached fruition. A special thanks to my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Horace and Jean Burch, for their unwavering belief in me in that I could achieve this goal. My thanks also to my principal, Dr. Olivia J. Hodges, for her enthusiastic support of this practicum. A heartfelt thanks to Donna Harrison, my proofreader, for her mastery of the English language and her ability to proofread anything.

A special thanks to Dr. William Anderson for his advice and insight on the making of a positive practicum experience. I truly appreciate his leadership and guidance through this practicum experience.

A loving thanks to my husband, Bob Burch, who has been so supportive of my work and willing to take on extra responsibilities so that I might achieve my goal. Finally, a mother's thanks to our three children, Brad, Kayce, and Brian, who make me proud to be their mom.

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Abstract

Increasing Awareness and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity among Fourth Graders through Integrated Curriculum Experiences. Burch, Connie W., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Classroom Teacher/Counselor/Principal/Curriculum Director

This practicum was designed to increase the cultural awareness of fourth-grade students of contributions to American society by those of different races and colors.

The writer designed a 12-week unit that exposes students to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans who have contributed to American society.

The outcomes from the practicum revealed that elementary school students can enumerate reasons for multicultural education, identify the contributions to American society by NonEuropeans, identify the native countries of their ancestors, identify a minority person as a favorite reading topic, and list at least three African Americans, three Hispanic Americans, and three Native Americans who have contributed to American society.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Description of Community

According to demographic data from the local Chamber of Commerce, the writer's community is a large suburban area encompassing 440 square miles with a population of 412,000. The county is home to 247 international firms and over 400 high-tech companies. An international airport within an hour's drive of this community contributes to its universal appeal. Residents are employed in a variety of high-tech jobs with 80% of the population working within the county borders.

Rolling hills and picturesque views contribute to the allure of this progressive county. Although most of the land was once cultivated, only approximately 11% of the land is currently farmed. Land adjacent to cities is used for urban development, and the remaining land is pasture or hardwood trees.

Socioeconomic status fluctuates from one area to another in this large district. Dual-income, predominantly White, middle-class families are the largest segment of the population. Pockets of low-socioeconomic families are sprinkled throughout the

county but compose only approximately 10% of the population. The average household income is $47,024.

The county parks and recreation division manages 21 parks and recreational sites within the community. The community also boasts a museum of natural history, an arts center, and a botanical garden. A variety of yearly events contribute to the family recreational focus of this community.

A civic and cultural center nurtures the community's culture and performing arts. The 50,000-square-foot exhibition hall houses a 6,000-square-foot ballroom and a 700-seat performing arts theater. Area choral groups, a county orchestra, and a youth symphony utilize the cultural center.

Health care is available at the 190-bed medical center or the many surrounding medical care facilities. The hospital system includes a 100-bed psychiatric facility providing care for adults and adolescents.

Description of Work Setting

The school district provides educational opportunities in 64 schools to 75,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Programs designed

to meet the individual needs of each student are employed in the elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high schools (9-12), while additional opportunities are available through the school system's vocational education center, special education center, community school programs, and technical school.

Ethnic and cultural diversity contribute to the richness of this progressive school district. Students from a melange of countries with 84 different languages enhance global awareness. The majority of the students are White; however, Native Americans, Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, and Multiracial students also constituted the student body of this ever-changing district. Table I summarizes the racial diversity of the student body according to school district records.

Free or reduced lunches are served to the 12% of the population that meet the requirements. Family size compared to family income is computed to determine eligibility for the lunch program. System wide, 2,262 students receive lunch at a nominal fee and 7,307 students receive lunch without charge.

Table 1

Racial Profile of Student Population

Race	Number of Students	
	District Elementary Schools	Writer's School
Native American	.1	.1
Asian	5.8	.5
African American	8.4	1.5
Hispanic	3.4	.4
White	81.9	97.2
Multi-racial	.4	.3

Special and gifted education services are offered throughout the system. Intelligence and achievement tests are utilized as qualifiers for the gifted program; 10% of the student body meets the criteria. Special education meets the needs of 7,500 students system wide. Teacher referral, parent referral, or both may be the first step toward inclusion in this program. A battery of intelligence

and achievement tests, anecdotal records, interviews, checklists, and psychological evaluations are used to assess referred students.

The school district employes 8,000, making it the largest employer in the county. Five thousand employees are teachers, of whom 59% hold master's degrees and beyond. Educators are offered opportunities for continuous growth through staff development courses. The proximity to universities allows educators additional opportunities to further their scope of knowledge. System wide, the teacher-student ratio is 25 to 1, permitting teachers to apply their expertise in manageable classroom settings.

This rapidly changing district is one of the fastest growing systems in the nation. Its projected enrollment by the year 2000 is 100,000. Its proximity to a large metropolis encourages international companies to locate in this county, thereby continually adding ethnic and cultural diversity to the school system.

The writer's work setting is an elementary school (K-5) located in a rural section of a

suburban school district. The school's student population of approximately 1,200 is increasing rapidly as new development emerges and large farms disappear. Free or reduced lunch is furnished to 11% of the population. The professional staff comprises 66 certified and 33 noncertified employees.

The mission statement of this district, hence this school, is to provide each student a rigorous and challenging education in which academic skills are learned and applied. The strategic goals strive for 100% of the students to achieve at their optimum and make successful transitions into the post-secondary endeavors of their choice.

More of a community school than others in the district, this school has served many families for generations, with some current students the grandchildren of former students. The community, therefore the school, is a close-knit group of people with deep religious roots and traditional standards. Parental involvement is extremely high and home support for the school is exceptional.

Writer's Role

This writer, an elementary education major, holds a Specialist in Education degree and meets state certification requirements in elementary education. The writer has earned Staff Development Units (SDU) on a plethora of educational issues, served on the district science restructuring committee, attended local and state conferences, and completed Talent Unlimited training.

The writer's primary responsibility is to meet the educational needs of a diverse group of 22 fourth-grade students. The class is composed of 10 girls and 12 boys with varying cognitive abilities: Two students are enrolled in the gifted program and four students receive special education services.

Implementation of the school district's curriculum is a crucial responsibility of the writer. The curriculum includes language arts, math, science, social studies, and health. The school is committed to providing educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment while challenging students to reach their potential.

Multicultural education is encouraged in this

rapidly changing county. As the population moves from a majority White race to encompass a vast array of ethnic groups and races, educators are supported as they strive to meet the educational needs of every student. With the flexibility granted by the curriculum and county, this writer adjusts the curriculum to expose students to a variety of cultures and races.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem that was solved in this practicum is that students had little awareness of the contributions to American society by those of different races and colors.

Problem Description

The students in this writer's school had minimal information about and exposure to ethnic minorities. This school is in a predominantly White middle class neighborhood with roots that cover several generations. Students are isolated geographically and demographically and have little contact with minority ethnic groups.

In addition to being physical segregated, these students were isolated by a curriculum that does not illuminate the contributions of NonEuropeans to American society.

Problem Documentation

Evidence for the existence of this problem was supported by student surveys and writings obtained from an entire class of 22 fourth-grade students. Using a written survey (Appendix A) with a 10-minute time limit, students were asked to recall from memory three African

Americans, three Native Americans, and three Hispanic Americans who had contributed to American society. This survey was evaluated by counting the number of correct responses in each category. The median score for this class of 22 students was the identification of 2 African Americans, 1 Native American, and zero Hispanic Americans, out of a possible 9 total points.

In another assignment, each student was instructed to identify a member of an ethnic minority who had contributed to American society and to compose a paragraph that identified similarities between the student's life and that of the minority member, explain the effect this person had on the student's life, and identify the contribution this person made to American society. The rubric (Appendix B) used to assess the writing sample evaluates each category with "Yes, the objective was met" or "No, the objective was not met." Writing samples revealed that, out of a possible 1 in each category, the median score was 1 for identifying a minority person, zero for recognizing similarities between the student's life and that of the minority person, zero for listing the effect the minority person had on the student's life, and zero for

identifying contributions to American society by the minority person.

In addition, students were asked to write as many reasons as they could generate that multicultural education is important. This assignment was given to the class with a 10-minute time limitation, and each relevant reason received a score of 1. Assessment of the reasons revealed a median score of 2.

Students were asked in another assignment to list the five characters, either real or fictitious, whom they had read about and whom they found most memorable. This assignment was evaluated by counting the number of ethnic minorities the students listed. The students achieved a median score of 1 out of a possible 5.

A written questionnaire revealed that the vast majority of students could not identify the native countries of their ancestors (Appendix C). The questionnaire asked students to list the ancestral homes of their grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents. The students achieved a median score of 1 out of a possible 3.

This data indicated that students were unaware of ethnic minorities and their contributions to American

society. Other than observing African Americans in the news, students had little exposure to or interaction with other races and cultures. Handicapped by a curriculum that did not stress contributions of Non-Europeans, these students remained ignorant about other cultures, ethnic groups, and races.

Causative Analysis

There were four major factors that contributed to the problems associated with multicultural education. Although a vast array of secondary causes were enumerated, the primary causes were related to unearned privilege that is available to White males, myths that White Americans believe, curricula that do not represent minorities' contributions, and White Americans' perception that multicultural education is unimportant.

First, unearned privilege of the White adult male in American society contributes to racism, sexism, and stereotypes. Without their being earned, opportunities were afforded White adult males that are not given to other members of society.

Second, myths that White Americans believe about minorities were perpetuated by folktales that lack

authenticity and contribute to the misrepresentation of ethnic groups or cultures. Folktales were one of the few sources of cultural information accessible to White Americans. Unfortunately, folktales were not always an accurate representation of a culture and perpetuate stereotypes. The limited amount of literature providing valid information about minority groups created a void as educators strive to bridge the cultural gap.

Another contributing factor, curricula that overlooked the contributions of ethnic minorities to American society and created a lack of history for minorities, contributed to the problem of multicultural education. Most school curricula do not focus on Non-Europeans' contributions to American society. For the most part, ethnic minorities were ignored or trivialized in textbooks and curricula. This lack of acknowledgment led to misrepresentation of minorities' heritages in America.

Finally, White Americans did not realize the need or reason for multicultural education, and teachers lacked knowledge concerning the customs, traditions, and behaviors of minority cultures. White Americans viewed

themselves as authentic Americans and did not perceive a need for exposure to other cultures. Persons who viewed real Americans as White, middle-class Christians saw little value in exploring other cultures. After all, they reason, such persons belonged to the major group; the others are savages or immigrants. Teachers lacked knowledge concerning the customs, traditions, and behaviors of minority cultures. A large percentage of teachers were not aware of other cultures and had limited exposure to minority children. This lack of knowledge created a barrier that educators must breach before multicultural education can reach fruition.

These four causes collectively created a problem that widens the cultural gap and hinders understanding and tolerance.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Educators believe that multicultural education is necessary to prepare students to live in the global society. Teachers believe that the study of multiculturalism is linked to school success in minority children, that literature does not always represent a culture, that counseling an ethnic minority child is different from counseling a White child, and that school

choice can build racial balance.

Price (1992) indicated that there is a correlation between self-esteem and academic success, and that minorities do not develop high self-esteem without models from their race or culture. Self-esteem affects students in a variety of ways: socially, emotionally, and academically. Children with low self-esteem are withdrawn and have a sense of hopelessness and loss. These feelings in turn affect their academic achievement. Students do not perform to their potential when hindered by self-doubt and low opinions of their culture.

According to Price (1992), cultural tolerance and success are related. Society's acceptance of a culture or race has a direct effect on the financial success of persons from that culture or race. Employment opportunities must not be an exclusionary practice based on myths about a culture or its people. Although discrimination is prohibited by law, there appears to be a glass ceiling that affects certain segments of American society.

Hearne (1993) reported that folktale books lack source notes and that the burden to include the notes

and authenticate the work is the responsibility of the adaptor, illustrator, and publisher. Source notes provide the reader with the specific source and cultural context, and they identify and explain any changes the author has initiated. Without source notes, the authenticity of the story is questionable. Cultural awareness and appreciation grow from knowledge. Literature presented to students as culturally significant must carry with it credibility. Folktales can easily misrepresent and create negative connotations about a culture.

Lee and Richardson (1991) espoused the idea that counseling for minority children must revolve around the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of their culture. To help students reach their fullest potential, their cultural framework must be understood, respected, and valued. Students' perceptions of themselves and their world are inherent to their culture. Counseling must use the culture of the student as the basis from which counselors can begin to problem solve creatively.

Teachers need an appreciation for the different methods of responding to situations. Students' cultures will guide their responses. Instead of judging a

response as right or wrong, a teacher should view the response in the context of the race, ethnic group, and culture of the student. Sensitivity to cultural diversity must guide interaction between student and teacher.

Yanofsky and Young (1992) described a White Plains, New York, program that allows parents to select their child's school while maintaining racial-ethnic balance throughout the system. Seven major elements are encompassed in the program: indication of preference, guaranteed priority for siblings, residential preference, deadline, lottery, waiting list, and transfer. Since the conception of this program, the percentage of parents who have voluntarily selected a school outside their residential attendance area has steadily increased. This program's success appears to be rooted in parental choice, not forced busing.

Parental input in any school is a necessity. Parents must feel valued and have options available to them. Racial harmony cannot be forced but can be obtained through community involvement.

Research reveals that learning styles affect acquisition of knowledge and that minority students are

hampered by cultural barriers and teaching styles. Roadblocks to learning must be destroyed if the educational system is going to provide opportunities for all of its students.

Correa and Tulbert (1991) examined the current crisis regarding meeting the educational needs of culturally diverse students. Culturally diverse students have unique behaviors representative of their backgrounds. These behaviors can be misinterpreted if educators are not aware of the cultural characteristics of these students. According to Correa and Tulbert, meeting the educational needs of these students requires interactive teaming, parental involvement, service delivery options, a support system, and a curriculum that relates to their culture.

Educating diverse students requires adjustments in the status quo of the curriculum. Teaching and learning styles should be correlated to enhance understanding.

Encisco (1994) reported on a research project that makes connections using literature and cultural imagination. As students read about experiences different from their own, they conceptualize those differences and relate them to their life experiences.

These connections allow students to see other cultures as being different from, but similar to their own.

Using cultural imagination permits insight into another culture and way of life. Identifying with aspects of that culture breaks down barriers that separate people and nations. Using cultural imagination requires that dance, music, art, and all aspects of the curriculum be interrelated.

Giroux (1992) felt that a multicultural curriculum must reflect the social, cultural, and political diversity that characterizes American life. National identity will not be damaged by identifying the unique factors of American society, but will be enhanced by celebrating its diversity. According to Giroux, one critical element of a multicultural curriculum is to analyze how social systems perpetuate racism and other forms of discrimination. Recognizing these forms is the first step toward eliminating discrimination.

Rejoicing in the wealth of diversity that contributes to Americanism, recognizing the value of each citizen, and honoring the traditions of dissimilar cultures will result in a unified society that functions with one heart. Schools must prepare students for the

next millennium when people of color will replace Whites as the majority.

Howells (1992) reported on a gifted minority program that espoused two basic assumptions: Giftedness exists in all racial and ethnic groups, and the realization of intellectual potential begins with the recognition of that potential. Enrichment, the affective component, and academics are the three aspects of education enhanced by this pilot program. The enrichment component exposes gifted minority students to a variety of cultural experiences. The affective component develops positive self-concept while the academic component presents the regular academic curriculum in an accelerated program.

Schools must realize the inherent basis of some standardized tests. All too often these tests are used as the sole indicator of giftedness. Other avenues must be explored to identify the minority gifted and to help them reach their full potential.

Research indicates that the causes of the problem stem from racism, cultural isolation of students, and misrepresentation of ethnic minorities in print. Recognizing and acknowledging the causes of a problem

are the first step toward a solution.

Baird (1992) explained a unit she created for an eighth-grade classroom to combat racism, bigotry, and hate. Identifying prejudices involved examining the community, family unit, and self. Objectives of this unit included empowering young people with knowledge and thinking skills necessary to make intelligent decisions. Guest speakers, literature, and writings were used to stimulate thinking and engage students in the process.

Teachers' knowledge and the belief that they can make a difference will result in classrooms where diversity is celebrated and appreciated. When educators take the first steps toward appreciating cultures, the road to equality is being paved.

Miller-Lachmann (1994) revealed that folktales from unfamiliar cultures may represent a distortion of reality. When one is familiar with a culture, it is easy to discern fantasy from reality; however, when the culture is unfamiliar, those lines are easily blurred. Folktales from distant locations may be assimilated as factual information about that culture or ethnic group. Although more books are being published about Non-European cultures, for young readers there is a

deficiency in literature that realistically represents these cultures.

Teachers need an awareness of potential problems in using folktales as a basis for multicultural education. The distortion of reality could compound the problems facing a diverse society. Efforts should be made to represent races, ethnic groups, and cultures in an authentic manner.

McElmeel (1993) indicated that most books that portray minorities represent them in folktale or stereotypical fashion. Books about African Americans predominantly feature sports heroes, Native American literature features Indians in costumes and portrays them as warmongers, and Hispanic American books feature these minority people as migrant workers. Resources that represent minorities in an accurate fashion are needed. The historical perspective is important but does not outweigh the need for contemporary portrayal of ethnic groups.

Schools and public libraries need to pursue publishing companies that accurately and sensitively portray cultures in a realistic fashion. Books that represent contributions to American society should

also be aggressively pursued.

Schmidt (1995) described the difficulties facing ethnic minority children in a kindergarten literacy program. Research identified four patterns that interfere with literacy development and social interaction: Social interaction throughout the school year is negative; the school's staff lacks understanding of the students and their cultures; the staff lacks interest in the students' home languages; and the staff seems unaware of the cultural biases that can occur in the testing and interpretation of standardized tests. When combined, these factors result in ethnic minority children being misunderstood, isolated, and incorrectly diagnosed in academics.

Educators must be trained in cultural diversity. Teachers need to understand the role culture plays in language development and social interaction. Students whose primary language is not English face a vast array of obstacles to overcome in the educational arena. Educators who realize these obstacles can implement interventions to help students reach their potential. The literature indicates that students lack knowledge about ethnic minorities and diverse cultures.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

Students will have an awareness of diverse cultures and an appreciation of the contributions made by ethnic minorities to American culture.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. In a 10-minute time frame, all students will list from memory at least three African Americans, three Native Americans, and three Hispanic Americans who have contributed to American society.
2. All students will write a paragraph on a minority person, enumerating similarities between the minority person's life and their own, identifying ways the minority person has affected their lives, and identifying the contribution made to society by the minority person.
3. All students will be able to identify reasons that multicultural education is important.
4. When asked to list five persons they have read about, either real or fictitious, all students will include at

least two persons who are members of ethnic minorities.
5. All students will be able to list the ancestral homes of their grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents.

Measurement of Outcomes

The outcomes will be assessed in the following manner:
1. A written survey will be utilized to ascertain if the students can identify three members of three ethnic groups: African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanic Americans (Appendix A). The students will be allowed 10-minutes to complete the survey by recalling from memory three members of each ethnic group. This outcome will be evaluated by counting the number of correct responses in each category. The median score will be 3.
2. Students will write a paragraph that includes the following: the name of the minority person, the similarities between the life of the minority person and their own, the effect the minority person has had on the students' lives, and the contribution the minority person made to American society. The paragraph will be assessed using a teacher-generated rubric (Appendix B). The rubric used to assess the writing sample will evaluate each section with "Yes, the objective was met"

or "No, the objective was not met." The median score will be 1 in each category, for a total of 4.

3. In a 10-minute time period, students will generate a written list that explains why multicultural education is important. The list should include valid and logical reasons that multicultural education is important. The teacher will use a class-generated checklist to determine if the reasons are valid. Each valid reason will receive a score of 1. The median score will be 3.

4. Students will create a written list of the five most memorable characters about whom they have read. The list will be evaluated for ethnic minority representation. Each minority character will receive a score of 1. The median score will be 1.

5. Students will be able to list the ancestral homes of their grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents (Appendix C). Accuracy of lists will be determined by comparing students' responses with those provided by parents on a questionnaire (Appendix D). The median score will be 2.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

The problem solved in this practicum is that students had little awareness of the contributions to American society by those of different races and colors.

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The literature suggests a variety of methods to include multicultural education in the curriculum. Realizing the need for and importance of ethnic and racial awareness is a first step toward developing a curriculum that includes cultural diversity. As educators struggle with the most appropriate method to include cultural awareness, school systems are debating the merit of multiculturalism. White American students need to understand the rationale for multicultural education in the curriculum.

Banks (1993) explored the myths and misconceptions concerning multicultural education. The first myth is that multicultural education is for others. White mainstream America has a propensity to believe that multicultural education is for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other minority groups. Instead of viewing multicultural education as preparation to

live in a culturally diverse global society, some White Americans view it as an instrument to destroy White culture.

The second misconception, identified by Banks (1993), is that multicultural education opposes Western tradition. Multicultural education seeks the truth about America's historical treatment of Non-Whites and accuracy concerning the contributions of Non-Whites to American society. Diversity education seeks to enhance information available to students about Western civilization.

The third myth and potentially the most damaging is that multicultural education will divide the nation. Multicultural experience should bring the nation closer together with a sense of pride in the contributions made by a richly diverse society.

Howard (1993) revealed that White students, as well as students from other cultures, can participate in the building of a multicultural America. American students need an awakening to their heritage and the circumstances that brought their ancestors to America. When students appreciate the historical reasons for immigrating to America and the rich history and

heritage that these immigrants brought, then White Americans can begin to accept the pluralism of their society.

Educators should highlight the connections between cultures and societies. Realizing that no culture developed on its own and no culture is supreme is a step toward appreciating and valuing other cultures.

Lefton (1992) described a pilot program in New York aimed at breaking down stereotypes of race, sex, or color. The program is unique in the fact that students want to attend it and have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Focusing on the goals of eliminating stereotypes and encouraging communication between people of different races and cultures, the program has a free format that does not utilize a textbook but requires the students to read newspapers and selected chapters from history books and to listen to guest speakers.

A program of this nature should foster communication and alleviate misconceptions among students. The success of this program is enhanced by the diversity of the student population. In areas where a multicultural student population exists, this type of program would be beneficial.

Marker (1992) proposed that educators need to evaluate the generalizations they perpetuate about Native Americans. Marker suggested a variety of ways to eliminate misconceptions about Native Americans: invite tribal elders to speak at schools; teach a unit on treaties; discuss Native Americans' viewpoints when discussing modern social problems; avoid neatly packaged conclusions; remember generalizations are only generalizations; emphasize the diversity in life patterns and physical features exhibited by Native Americans; and read books that have been written and endorsed by Native Americans.

Native Americans have a rich and diverse heritage that can only be realized through an accurate and sensitive presentation of their culture. To foster pluralism and eliminate prejudice, teachers must acknowledge the contributions of Native Americans.

School curricula need to be restructured to include contributions of Non-European cultures to American society. Banks (1993) argued that schools must undergo fundamental changes to prepare low-income and minority students to be successful in a technological society. Programs that involve parents have produced

positive results in the academic arena, but more changes are needed to bridge the cultural gap. Banks believes that schools must undertake new challenges and restructure the school environment. Schools must become inclusionary institutions that teach the value and worth of all people. Restructuring schools takes a commitment to accept and acknowledge the pluralism of American society. Cooperative grouping of students appears to have a positive influence toward this end. Working together creates a community of learners where accomplishing the task is the main objective. Economic status, race, religion, and ethnic background become inconsequential.

For some students, cooperative learning allows them to reach their academic potential while a competitive environment hinders their academic success. Educators must be sensitive to the learning styles of a diverse group of students and plan activities to meet their educational needs.

Garcia (1993) evaluated the purpose of multiculturalism in the classroom and its effect on textbooks. Multiculturalism is both a political and an educational issue. Textbooks appear to be the

political football. Garcia reported that publishing companies have changed textbooks in response to pressure. Textbooks today have more visual and print representation of ethnic groups; however, these representations remain stereotypical and limited in quality. Political multiculturalism is a controversial issue that is being discused and debated across the nation. Pressure comes from politicians to represent all faces of the culture, and in response educators strive to represent diversity in their classrooms. The browning of America demands a change in curricula.

Curricula must meet the demands of an ever-changing society, not with trivilization of cultures and races, but with accurate representations. Textbooks need to be written with accountability for and sensitivity to diverse cultures.

McCarthy (1993) reported that many public schools' curricula are under attack by special interest groups who wish to control the textbooks and the curricula. McCarthy suggested that instead of arguing that challenged instructional programs are valuable, neutral policy makers should defend the content, attitudes, and skills that will not be compromised. Allowing one

special group to dictate the curriculum is setting the stage for educational disaster. One group should not control a curriculum; instead, the it should reflect the values, ideals, and culture of the society.

Racism and hate will only be diminished when open communication, accurate representation, and true appreciation of other cultures are integrated into a curriculum. Groups that wish to control integration of diversity into a curriculum are striving to control the thoughts, ideas, and values of a society.

Epstein and Ellis (1992) reported on the refusal of Oakland, California, to utilize a social studies textbook that trivialized Non-European cultures and neglected contributions made by people of color to American society. A committee of local leaders designed an alternative social studies curriculum when the one proposed by the state was determined to be flawed with misconceptions. The goal of the alternative curriculum was to acknowledge, appreciate, and validate Non-Europeans' and Europeans' contributions to the diverse society in America. According to Epstein and Ellis, the need for this alternative curriculum arose for four reasons: a rise in racism nationally, new confidence on

the part of people of color regarding their historical contributions to American society, an ethnic mix of school board members, and the challenge made by African American educators regarding the current view of American history.

Educators, students, parents, and society should demand that textbooks contain accurate and fair representations of all races and ethnic groups. To neglect one group while favoring another results in a distorted view of American history.

Literature, writings, and point-of-view articles can be utilized as methods to teach multiculturalism. Students can internalize the emotions of a group of people through reading their literature.

Vandergrift (1994) revealed that the struggles, celebrations, despairs, and triumphs of African Americans are expressed in poetry. Reading literature enhances cultural awareness, and understanding poetry produces role models, as well as revealing feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Poetry crosses cultural barriers and permits the reader or listener to visualize events. Although not all poetry represents the positive sides of the African American heritage, much of this poetry is a

living history.

Poetry can be used as an avenue for students to express their emotions. Multicultural education allows different ethnic groups to express negative and positive aspects of their cultures. Poetry opens the door for students of diverse backgrounds to communicate with each other.

Gillespie, Powell, Clements, and Swearinger (1994) reviewed Newberry Medal Books from 1930 to present from a multicultural perspective. The review generated four steps used when selecting books: read the book to ascertain if the story accurately reflects the group's culture, assess the book for racism or bias, use several books to convey a culture, and evaluate the way the book teaches diversity. A book's representation of a culture affects students' conceptions of that culture.

Teachers need an awareness of bias and racism in books and a knowledge base about cultures. Reading a book and sharing its information with students without evaluating the book for accuracy leads to false assumptions.

Nelson (1994) designed a history lesson around a literacy approach that encourages students to examine

cultural beliefs and values. This approach supports students as they examine how cultural beliefs and values influence perception and understanding of events.

Presenting and analyzing different perspectives allow students to develop an understanding of other people. Diversity education must open the doors of communication. Appreciation, acceptance, and tolerance can only be nurtured through communication and understanding.

Lobach (1995) examined the value of students exploring heritage through writer's workshops and professional publications. A young writer's workshop is held over a 10-day period during the summer. The participants write about their firsthand experiences of Japanese American traditions and customs. Workshop experiences include cooking, art, and special events that foster understanding of Japanese American traditions.

These activities allow students to experience the culture without trivializing it. The writing and publishing process gives merit and value to students' work. After writing, editing, and rewriting, the students submit their work to The Kids Explore Series.

The goal of these publications is to promote better understanding of America's diverse cultural heritage.

Teacher education programs must prepare teachers to meet the needs of a diverse population. Garcia and Pugh (1992) proposed that schools should reflect the changing culture of America and that teacher education must pave the way for this change. This appears to be the crux of the problem in American education. America's schools primarily represent White nglo-Saxon culture and not the vast multicultural conf.guration that embodies America. Multiculturalism in education is not fully committed to bridging the gap between White America and the rest of society. Few schools are dedicated to the belief that multicultural education is more than a few words about a famous African American.

Teacher education programs must lead the way for comprehensive multicultural education to begin. Multicultural education must become a vital part of teacher education courses if professional educators are going to possess the skills necessary for teaching cultural awareness.

Bullard (1992) described a humanities program taught in Dade County, Florida, that is designed to

acquaint public school teachers with the literature and arts of different cultures. The program exposes teachers to a wide variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Educators in this program predominantly teach in schools with diverse populations and high racial tension. Objectives of the program are to equip teachers with the knowledge to expose students to a wide variety of cultures through literature.

Teacher education programs must provide guidance as educators strive to teach a pluralistic society. Programs, training, and inservices are necessary if educators are going to help solve society's cultural and racial identity problems.

Gersten and Jimenez (1994) explained three approaches to literacy development in English-as-a-second language (ESOL) students. The research revealed that strategies for teaching ESOL students fall into three major categories: vocabulary development, mediation and feedback, and all areas of literacy development. Developing vocabulary and constructing meaning are a critical step in the acquisition of a language. Feedback and mediation must be frequent and allow students to learn new strategies. Literacy

development, both verbal and written, must use consistent language.

Gersten and Jimenez (1994) recommended mentoring and professional development as strategies to enhance teacher knowledge in the skills and competencies necessary to teach ESOL students. Mentoring permits a novice teacher to observe excellent instruction and interact with the mentor to solve problems. Professional development utilizes experts to relay information to teachers.

Hu-DeHart (1993) revealed that ethnic studies programs have had to fight for recognition and acceptance since their conception. Many institutes of higher learning have few if any ethnic studies programs. Most of these programs are located in the western part of the United States where a more diverse population lives. The reluctance of institutions of higher learning to create and maintain ethnic studies is rooted in the fact that these studies are perpetuated as being of little value.

To prepare students to be functional members of a diverse society, social awareness must be taught. Ignorance leads to racism, prejudice, and fear. Children

of today will enter a multicultural society in which they are ill-equipped to function if appropriate multicultural educational programs are not implemented in elementary schools. Racism and prejudice are learned behaviors. Schools, as social agencies, must be proactive in eliminating these unfounded fears and prejudices. Learning to share the planet and all its vast resources hinges on society's ability to work together.

From the research, a variety of ideas have been generated to integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum. Because of the geographic isolation of America, students are unaware of other cultures, traditions, and societies, and they need exposure to these diverse cultures. Exposing students to the diversity of American society can be accomplished through careful selection of authentic literature. This literature must realistically portray the values, beliefs, and customs of the culture. This approach exposes students to other cultures without judging the culture. This solution is material and time manageable and can be easily blended into the present curriculum.

Perspective writings permit the students to view

circumstances from others' points of view. Point-of-view writings permit students to discover others' feelings. This approach allows students to internalize the circumstances and situation of others. Through these writings students can identify with other cultures. This solution is manageable and will develop self-awareness in students.

Diversity education for teachers would enhance students' exposure to other cultures. This is a needed educational program that would enrich multicultural education. Although the need is great, this writer does not possess the power base to see this solution to fruition.

Description of Selected Solutions

The use of an integrated curriculum and a variety of materials allowed students to conceptualize the diversity of America. Students were exposed to other cultures through literature, computer programs, research, and class discussion. After a class discussion on the Person or People of the Week, students recorded in their journals the name, birth country, race, and contribution to American society of the Person or People of the Week. Students were exposed to other

cultures through oral and written assignments and research. Each student completed an oral and written report on a member of an ethnic minority group who contributed to American society. Students explored their own cultural backgrounds by identifying the countries from which their ancestors immigrated and by sharing information about their ancestors' cultures. This activity enabled students to realize that most people came to this country as immigrants.

These activities allowed students to reach the goal of becoming aware of other cultures and their contributions to American society. Through this 12-week unit students were exposed to a variety of cultures and identified with at least one member of an ethnic minority by writing a research paper on that person.

Report of Action Taken

This writer adhered to the 12-week lesson plan, but the number of students dropped from 22 to 20. During the first session, the writer presented an overview, validated the purpose, and explained the five outcomes of the unit. The People of the Week journals were disseminated to the class and instructions were given

for recording notes, thoughts, and information pertaining to the Person or People of the Week. The journals consisted of 12 pieces of notebook paper with front and back covers of construction paper.

As the writer set the stage for learning, the class discussed multicultural education and the reasons schools should include it in their curriculums. Students were afforded the opportunity to express their personal feelings and knowledge about different cultures. This open dialogue led to a discussion of the world and its rapidly changing population. Different races were identified, and this evolved into an introduction of the first Person of the Week.

Week 1

The writer read to the class a book on the life of Mary McLeod Bethune, an African American educator born to former slaves. As the writer shared the book, important facts and pertinent information were written on the chalkboard. Students were reminded to record the information in their journals.

As relevant information was presented in the literature, the writer led a class discussion about this information. Situations in Ms. Bethune's life that the

students did not understand were expounded upon by the writer.

Class discussion enumerated similarities between Mary McLeod Bethune's life and the students' lives, the effect Ms. Bethune had on the students' lives, and her contribution to American society. Students recorded this information in their journals.

Week 2

The writer began this lesson with a review of last week's Person of the Week. The class responded verbally to questions about Mary McLeod Bethune. Her life, her triumphs, and her struggles were retraced. The reasons for her difficulties were explored and possible solutions generated. The writer gave out the parent questionnaire (Appendix D) and instructed students to return the questionnaire by the next class session.

The writer shared a book on the life of Ralph Johnson Bunche, an African American educator instrumental in developing the United Nations. As the book was read aloud, the class recorded notes and pertinent information in their journals, and asked questions. The questions revolved around the treatment of African Americans by White Americans. The class

inquired why African Americans couldn't go to the theaters, hotels, and restaurants that White Americans frequented. The writer explained about racism and its effects on African Americans as well as on White Americans. The class generated solutions to racism and expressed the belief that the most appropriate way to eliminate racism is to accept people for what and who they are.

The writer led a class discussion on similarities between Bunche's life and their own, Bunche's effect on their lives, and his contribution to American society. The class concluded with a recap of the major events in Bunche's life.

Week 3

Questionnaires given out last week were collected. The students described the fun they'd had talking with their parents as the forms were completed. The class discussed the many countries from which their ancestors emigrated and located these countries on a world map. A few students shared brief histories of their families' migration to America.

The questionnaires revealed that the majority of the students' ancestors hailed from England, Ireland,

and Scotland. A few students are descendants of Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and African Americans.

The writer briefly reviewed the previous People of the Week and introduced this week's Person of the Week. Through literature, the life of Thurgood Marshall and his contributions to America were shared with the class. The book contained background information about his family and revealed that Thurgood Marshall was descended from slaves. Students recorded important information in their journals.

Students again expressed confusion about the fact that African Americans were limited in their opportunities. It was difficult for the class to grasp the concept that racism and the denial of opportunities was a fact of life for generations of African Americans. The class burst into applause when the writer read that Thurgood Marshall represented an African American seeking entry into Harvard University and won the case.

As in previous weeks, the similarities between the students' lives and the life of the Person of the Week were highlighted. Contributions to America and the effect Thurgood Marshall had on students' lives were

reviewed.

Week 4

The writer began this session by asking the class if anyone had heard of Martin Luther King, Jr. Several students had heard of him and shared what information they knew. The majority of the students, who had heard of Dr. King, knew he was an African American who desired equality for all people. A few students had toured his childhood home, and they shared what they had seen.

The writer explained the social relationships of African Americans and White Americans during the 190's, 50's, and 60's. Students needed to understand the social and cultural barriers of those decades before literature was shared with them so that they could comprehend why certain events took place. Several children's books on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. were shared with the class. The similarities between Dr. King's life and theirs, the effect Dr. King had on their lives, and the contributions Dr. King made to society were recorded in journals. Other significant information was also recorded in their journals, along with a short bibliographical sketch of Dr. King.

The writer shared with students the written

assignment that would be due in six weeks. Students were to write a report on a minority person, either African American, Hispanic American, or Native American, who had contributed to American society. The paper was to include the minority person's name, similarities between students' lives and that of the minority person, the effect the minority person had on their lives, and the contribution the minority person had made to American society. Students were given several suggestions for research, including utilizing the school's media center, writing to the minority person, and utilizing the public library.

Week 5

This week began with an explanation of the ancestral countries of Hispanic Americans. These countries were located on the map and students deliberated how these people arrived in America. Because students had difficulties visualizing ancestors of Hispanic Americans a discussion followed about the physical characteristics of Hispanic Americans.

A computer program highlighting the contributions of ethnically diverse people who have contributed to American society was loaded into the

computer and then relayed to the overhead projector. This enabled the entire class to view the program simultaneously. Personal data and the accomplishments of Alicia Alonzo, Herman Bodillo, Luis Alverze, and Joan Baez were presented. Students recorded this information in the journals. As each person's data was revealed, the class located his or her birth country or city and discussed his or her contributions to American society.

The class compared the difficulties that African Americans and Hispanic Americans experienced in America. Students debated ways to avoid stereotypes and prejudice, reaching a consensus that people should be judged by their character, not their color or national origin.

The writer reviewed the requirements for the paper on a minority person and encouraged students to select a book from the media center or public library. Many students had already selected a book and shared with the class the name of the person whom they were researching.

Week 6

This session began with students brainstorming reasons that multicultural education is important. They verbalized five primary reasons: White Americans can

alter the way they think about ethnic minorities, White Americans can have a better understanding of minorities, all people can learn from each other, all people can become friends, and all people should realize that others think differently. A class discussion followed that fostered students' understanding of multicultural education and the reasons it should be included in school curricula.

A computer program highlighting contributions to American society was used to teach about Vicki Carr, Ramona Banuelos, and Cecilla de Burciaga. Their birthdates, their contributions to American society, and similarities between their lives and those of students were discussed. Several students discussed other Hispanic American entertainers with whom they were familiar.

Students shared the name of the minority person who was the subject of their report. Some of the students verbalized information they had garnered from reading. They were reminded that many sources of information are available and utilizing them would enhance their report.

This session concluded with a recap of the

previous People or Person of the Week. Students verbally responded to questions concerning the contributions to American society and noteworthy events in the lives of these individuals.

Week 7

This writer began the session by distributing copies of Appendix B, the criterion by which the reports on minorities will be assessed. Each element of the rubric was discussed and students asked questions that clarified concepts. The writer explained that these were minimum standards and that a quality piece of work would contain a plethora of information. The oral report was discussed and several students wanted to dress-up as the minority person of their choice. The class adjudicated by class vote that dress-up was optional. A date three weeks in the future was set as the due date for the oral and written reports.

Reviewing the major reasons for implementing multicultural education was a springboard for introducing that week's Person of the Week. Students verbalized the same reasons as in the previous week but added that every school should have multicultural education programs so that students would not be

prejudiced.

Caesar Chavez, the Hispanic American founder of the National Farm Workers Association, was the Person of the Week. This writer shared with students a book that traced Chavez's life from his early years through his national leadership in an organization designed to aid migrant farm workers. Part of the class discussion revolved around how migrant farm workers lived and how arduous it was for their children to stay in school. This writer led a class discussion on the similarities and differences between Chevaz's life and their own and the contribution Chevaz made to American society.

As this multicultural unit progressed, students became more aware of the contributions of a diverse racial and cultural population to American society. Students have not just learned the names of a few NonEuropeans; they have also come to understand that all people contribute to the richness of a society.

Week 8

This week began with a review of reasons to include multicultural education in school curricula. Students cited reasons previous discussed, and many also elaborated that multicultural education was not only

important to further race relationships but that it was needed to foster understanding and acceptance of mentally and physically challenged people. The students felt that handicapped individuals are discriminated against as much as members of diverse ethnic groups and minorities. Through discussion the class decided that acceptance of differences and developing a nonjudgmental frame of mind evolve from education and knowledge. Students elaborated that the more knowledge a person has about a group of people or a situation, the more likely the person is to be tolerant of the people or situation.

This week's Peoples of the Week were Pablo Casals, Carlos Castanela, and Franklin Chang-Diaz. Aided by a computer linked to an overhead projector, the entire class viewed a computer program on these individuals and the contributions they made to American society. As in previous weeks, students recorded pertinent information in their journals.

This writer reminded students that the written and oral reports on member of ethnic minorities were due in a few weeks and that it was optional for them to dress-up for presentation of the oral reports.

Week 9

This week's session began with the writer asking the class to define the phrase "Native American." Many students contributed to the definition, and the class reached a concensus that a Native American was either a person already living in North America when Christopher Columbus arrived or a person descending from these people. This writer led a class discussion on the many groups of Native Americans and the effect their natural environment had on their way of life.

This writer shared a book on the life of Maria Martinez and her contributions of pottery to the art world. The writer and the class discussed similarities between Maria's life and their own, the effect she had on their lives, and the contributions she made to American society. As in previous weeks, students recorded these facts, along with other valuable information, in their journals.

As students continued to listen to the biography of Martinez, they began to verbalize that Indians did not hurt the Earth, but lived in harmony with it. This led to a discussion of pollution and ways that all Americans can contribute to a clean, safe environment.

As the lesson was concluded, the writer reminded students that oral and written reports were due next week and that dressing-up was optional.

Week 10

The students presented their oral and written reports on the minority persons they had researched. During oral reports, over half of the class dressed like the subjects of their reports and spoke as if they were their subjects. Subjects for students' research encompassed a wide range of people, including athletes, entertainers, political leaders, scientists, and artists. This writer was impressed with the depth of understanding verbalized by students concerning the obstacles in the minority persons' lives.

A class discussion following the presentations revealed students' feelings about the mistreatment of any group of people because of skin color or nationality. Every student could verbalize the way in which the subject of his or her report was mistreated. As the discussion closed, many students expressed the opinion that Americans just need to get along.

This writer ask the students to write down as many reasons as they could generate that multicultural

education is important. As they were writing, this writer circulated around the room and observed that the students needed very little think time to think of reasons for multicultural education.

LaDonna Harris, a Native American, was the Person of the Week. Her rise from a child of limited opportunities to a civil rights leader and supporter of Indian rights was traced. Students recorded in their journals pertinent information and were able to verbalize some of the obstacles Mrs. Harris had to overcome.

At the close of this session, students were asked to write down the native homes of their ancestors. The students completed this task in a short period of time and had little difficult identifying these locations.

Week 11

The writer began this session by asking the each student to compile a written list of the five most memorable persons, either real or fictitious, about whom they had read. Several students asked if they could list a group of people but were instructed to list individuals only. Students worked for a few minutes and easily completed the assignment.

This writer also asked students to compile from memory a written list of at least three African Americans, three Native Americans, and three Hispanic Americans who had contributed to American culture. A 10-minute time limitation was placed on this assignment. While circulating around the room, this writer observed that the students had little difficult compiling the list of African Americans and Native Americans, but had a difficult time generating a list of Hispanic Americans. Several students inquired if they could utilize their People of the Week journals to help them recall names. From students' comments, it appeared that recalling events was easier than recalling Hispanic American names.

Harold S. Jones, a Sioux Indian Episcopal bishop, was the Person of the Week and a book featuring contemporary American Indian leaders was the literature utilized for this class session. Students readily identified with many events in Bishop Jones' life: the loss of a beloved grandfather, devotion to and love of God, and the desire to help others. As the class discussed Bishop Jones' life, it was evident that students were making connections between Bishop Jones'

life and their own. The students recorded facts about Harold S. Jones in the Person of the Week journal.

Students had no trouble identifying the contribution Bishop Jones made to American society: They were grasping the concepts of the multicultural unit and beginning to view people as individuals, not as stereotypical members of a race. The students verbalized that Bishop Jones had held the same views as Martin Luther King, Jr.

Week 12

This writer began the session with an introduction of Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday, a Cherokee-Kiowa Indian, utilizing a book on contemporary American Indians to discuss Dr. Momaday's life, his perspective, and his hopes for Native Americans. The students identified similarities between his life and their own and identified his contributions to American society. Students recorded valuable information in their journals.

When asked their opinions of this multicultural unit, students unanimously agreed that it should be taught to other fourth graders and that they now have a better understanding of other culture and peoples.

Developing sensitivity to others, understanding other people, and valuing all persons and their contributions to American society were verbalized most frequently as the primary reason for teaching the unit.

Students expressed regret that the unit was over and thought that this writer should expand it for next year. One student verbally expressed his belief that this fourth-grade class is better prepared to live in a diverse world because of this multicultural unit.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem solved in this practicum was that students had little awareness of the contributions to American society by those of different races and ethnic background. This writer used an integrated curriculum and a variety of materials that allowed students to conceptualize the diversity of America. Students were exposed to other cultures through literature, computer programs, research, and class discussion. The goal of this practicum was that students would develop an awareness of diverse cultures and an appreciation of the contributions made by ethnic minorities to American culture.

The following outcomes were projected:

1. In a 10-minute time frame, all students will list from memory at least three African Americans, three Native Americans, and three Hispanic Americans who have contributed to American society.

This objective was met. The median score for each of the lists was three. Student-generated lists for African Americans contained the most entries, followed by Native Americans and then Hispanic

Americans. Sports figures, civil rights leaders, and professional singers were the most common African Americans listed. Native Americans were predominantly historical figures discussed in the fourth-grade curriculum or individuals that played a significant role in American history. Although the objective was met, the list of Hispanic Americans was the shortest of the three. A civil rights leader, an entertainer, and a professional baseball player dominated the list of Hispanic Americans.

2. All students will write a paragraph on a minority person, enumerating similarities between the minority person's life and their own, identifying ways the minority person has affected their lives, and identifying the contribution made to society by the minority person.

This objective was met. The students conducted research on and wrote about minorities. A dearth of available literature in the school media center and the public library hindered students' selection of Hispanic Americans. Most of the students realized similarities between their lives and the minority person's in terms of childhood experiences. Students

internalized that, regardless of nationality or race, responsibilities and chores are a part of all children's lives. A few students generated abstract similarities, such as sharing a value system, but the majority of students identified concrete similarities. Contributions made by a minority person and the effect this person had on the student's life were usually expressed in correlate to each other. Through identifying the contribution the minority person made to American society, the students determined his or her effect on their lives.

3. All students will be able to identify reasons that multicultural education is important.

This objective was met. The median score was 5. Students generated a variety of reasons that multicultural education was important. Avoiding prejudiced thoughts, behaviors, and actions and understanding how other people felt were two of the reasons listed most frequently. From the impressive responses, it was evident that students had realized the value of and necessity for multicultural education. Table II summarizes the seven most

frequent responses.

Table II

Reasons for Multicultural Education

Reason	n
Avoiding prejudiced behavior	12
Understanding other cultures	6
Understanding other people's feelings	12
Learning about history	11
Identifying similarities between people	7
Changing the way people think	7
Making friends and getting along	7

n = number of students out of 19 that listed that reason

4. When asked to list five persons they have read about, either real or fictitious, all students will include at least two persons who are members of ethnic minorities.

This objective was met. The median score was 3. The most frequently listed minority persons were African Americans, followed by Native Americans and

then Hispanic Americans. The majority of the students listed an ethnic minority member who the class had discussed or read about. Most of the lists contained two African Americans, predominantly civil rights leaders, attorneys, or lawyers, and one Native American or Hispanic American. The Native American was usually an historical figure or a prominent entertainer, while the Hispanic American was usually a professional sports player.

5. All students will be able to list the ancestral homes of their grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents.

This outcome was met. The vast majority of the students were able to identify the native lands of their ancestors. Many of the students' families have resided in this small rural community for several generations and it was a feasible task to ascertain their ancestral homes.

Discussion

The overarching goal and outcomes of this practicum were met. Information about African Americans and Native Americans was plentiful and the students related well to these groups; however,

there were some obstacles that hindered the students' appreciation of Hispanic Americans.

One obstacle that severely limited students' understanding and appreciation of Hispanic American culture was the lack of authentic literature. The media center contained only one biography on an Hispanic American. The other Hispanic Americans introduced in this unit were presented via computer program. The program was informative but did not contain the depth and volume of information that books would contain. This dearth of information did not allow students to relate to Hispanic Americans, thus making it difficult for them to recall memorable figures and list Hispanic Americans.

Another factor that hindered the acquisition of knowledge about Hispanic Americans was the language barrier. Most Hispanic Americans have names of Spanish origin, which are difficult for most fourth-graders to pronounce and remember. An interesting fact noted by this writer was that an Hispanic American entertainer who had changed her name to a common English name was on most students' lists of minority people. It appears that the ability to

pronounce and or spell a name affects recall positively.

A third factor that encumbered the conceptualization of Hispanic Americans was their lack of familiarity to students. The majority of the students have African American friends and are familiar with Native Americans from history; however, they lack connections with Hispanic Americans. The absence of relationships became an obstacle when students tried to identify with Hispanic Americans.

African Americans and Native Americans were identified more easily because of students' familiarity and their ability to recall names. Many of the students had prior information about African Americans and Native Americans, which facilitated the acquisition of knowledge.

Since a large percent of America's population is Hispanic American, this writer feels that schools need to foster curricula that expound upon the contributions of Hispanic Americans. Encouraging the acquisition of authentic literature about Hispanic Americans will allow students to expand their base

of knowledge. Bridging the cultural gap is to some extent dependent on the availability of materials.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should be concerned before implementing a multicultural education program.

1. Students should be exposed to a brief history of the treatment of NonEuropeans in America. This writer found that students had very little base knowledge about slavery, racism, and prejudice. Many of the students had a difficult time conceptualizing the treatment of minorities.

2. Provide opportunity for members of ethnic minorities to share their experiences with the class. Meeting an individual who has experienced prejudice would make the concept real. Students would also more easily relate to a person than to printed literature.
printed literature.

3. Students should be required to complete a project that fosters ways to prevent racism and prejudice. Racism and prejudice are learned behaviors, and the avoidance of internalizing

negative feelings and beliefs needs to be a focus of multicultural education.

Dissemination

The practicum results will be disseminated to other professionals in a variety of ways. Interested teachers in this writer's work setting have requested a copy of the practicum and wish to consult with this writer to discuss integral parts of implementation. Copies of the approved practicum report will be sent to the county's multicultural center and human relations department. This writer has also submitted an application to present this unit at a state reading convention.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

Name_____

African Americans	Native Americans	Hispanic Americans
1._____	1._____	1._____
2._____	2._____	2._____
3._____	3._____	3._____

APPENDIX B

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING WRITING SAMPLES

Name_____

Evaluating Rubric for Writings about Minorities

Identified a Minority Person

0_____1
No Yes

Revealed Similarities Between a
Minority Person and Himself

0_____1
No Yes

Realized the Effect the Minority
Person Had on His Life

0_____1
No Yes

Identified the Contribution the
Minority Person made to American Society

0_____1
No Yes

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IDENTIFYING NATIVE COUNTRIES OF ANCESTORS

Name_____

1. Identify native country of grandparents.

_____

_____

2. Identify native country of great-grandparents.

_____

_____

3. Identify native country of great-great-grandparents.

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name_____

Child's Name_____

Dear Parents:

We are exploring the cultural diversity of America and the contributions made by a diverse society to this nation. Please assist us by answering these questions.

Thank you

1. What are the native countries of your parents?

_____

2. What are the native countries of your grandparents?

_____

3. What are the native countries of your great-grandparents?

_____